

FINAL BILL REPORT

EHB 1924

C 253 L 17
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Concerning small forest landowners.

Sponsors: Representatives Dent and Fitzgibbon.

House Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources
Senate Committee on Commerce, Labor & Sports

Background:

Farm Labor Contractors.

The state Farm Labor Contractor Act (FLCA) provides for licensing and regulation of farm labor contractors. A "farm labor contractor" is a person who, for a fee, performs any farm labor contracting activity. "Farm labor contracting activity" means recruiting, soliciting, employing, supplying, transporting, or hiring agricultural workers.

The Director of the Department of Labor and Industries (Director) issues licenses to farm labor contractors. The fees are \$35 per year for farm labor contractors not engaged in forestation or reforestation and \$100 per year for those who are engaged in forestation or reforestation. There are also surety bond and insurance requirements.

The Director also enforces various requirements and prohibitions applicable to farm labor contractors. The Director may bring suit upon a surety bond on behalf of a worker whose rights have been violated or seek to enjoin a person acting as a farm labor contractor in violation of the Act. There are civil penalties of up to \$1,000, as well as criminal penalties for certain violations of the FLCA.

Burning Permits.

A person must have a valid written burning permit obtained from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to burn any flammable material on any lands under the protection of the DNR or to burn refuse or waste forest material on forestlands protected by the DNR. The DNR must establish by rule a fee schedule in connection with permits for silvicultural burning.

Small Forest Landowners.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

To qualify as a small forest landowner, a person must be an owner of forestland who has harvested no more than an average timber volume of 2 million board feet per year in the three years preceding application to the DNR and does not expect to harvest more than that amount in the 10 years following application to the DNR.

Summary:

The definition of "farm labor contractor" is modified to exclude a person performing farm labor contracting activity solely for a small forest landowner who receives services of no more than two agricultural employees at any given time.

The DNR is directed to perform and submit to the Legislature by October 31, 2017, an analysis of the possibility of streamlining the burning permit process for small forest landowners.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	98	0	
Senate	47	0	(Senate amended)
House	96	0	(House concurred)

Effective: July 23, 2017